Rush Creek Hydroelectric System,
Worker Cottage (Building 103)
Rush Creek
June Lake Vicinity
Mono County
California

HAER No. CA-166-B

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HAER
CAL
26-JULA.V,
1B-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Rush Creek Hydroelectric System,
Worker Cottage (Building No. 103)
Rush Creek
June Lake Vicinity
Mono County
California

HAER No. CA-166-B

Location: Sections 17 and 20, Township 2 South, Range 26 East, M.D.M, Mono County, California (UTM Coordinates 11/313081/4181858), in the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountain Range about 2.5 miles west of the town of June Lake, California, and 260 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

Date of Construction: 1922

Builder: Nevada-California Power Company, W. C. Tanner, Architect

Present Owner: Southern California Edison Company
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

Original Use: Worker Cottage

Present Use: Worker Cottage

Significance: Building 103 is one of the earliest Rush Creek worker cottages. Designed by the Riverside, California architect, W. C. Tanner, it combines Craftsman Bungalow and English Cottage styles. The Rush Creek System is significant for its position in the development of hydroelectric generation on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, and for innovations in dam construction and powerhouse planning.

Report Prepared By: Thomas T. Taylor
Southern California Edison Company
Environmental Affairs Division
Rosemead, CA 91770

Date: September 30, 1997

1. DESCRIPTION

The Rush Creek Powerhouse and associated residential complex is located at 7,230 feet elevation just southwest of Silver Lake at the base of the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Silver Lake is the most northerly of the lakes in the June Lake Loop which drains north into the Mono Lake Basin.

When constructed, hydroelectric power plants like Rush Creek occupied remote locations and required around-the-clock attendance by operators and maintenance workers. As a result, residential complexes consisting of worker cottages and support facilities were constructed at these power plants to accommodate the workers and their families.

Building 103 was built by the Nevada-California Power Company in 1922 along with several other worker cottages (buildings 104, 105, and 108). Buildings 103, 104, and 105 were originally built from the same plans. All of these buildings were designed by California architect, W. C. Tanner. A resident of Riverside from 1915 to 1923, Tanner had a studio in the Carmel Tower of the Mission Inn where he painted murals in the kitchen and lectured on art. In 1921 he had an architect's office on Main Street in Riverside.

Building 103 is located at the southern end of the Rush Creek powerhouse complex along with worker cottages 104 and 106 in a "natural" unlandscaped setting. Building 103 is situated on a rise approximately one hundred feet south of the powerhouse (photo CA-166-B-1). An asphalt-paved stub road looping up from the south Rush Creek powerhouse complex collector road around the north end of building 103 provides vehicular access to this house (photo CA-166-B-2) as well as building 104.

Building 103 incorporates approximately 800 square feet of interior space into a single-story structure with basement (SCE drawing 439021). The outer walls of this structure are 4-inch poured concrete reinforced with 3/8-inch rods. The design of building 103 is similar to English city working cottages, incorporating a steep side-gable peaked roof, tall slender chimney, and six-over-one sash fenestration of the English Cottage Style into its Rustic look. Craftsman Style embellishments include knee-bracket supports and decorative ship-lap siding (now covered by asphalt shingles) on the gable ends, and exposed rafter tails.

Accessed by stone and concrete steps, the recessed front entry has an offset gable with crown molding (photo CA-166-B-3). The front porch is framed by a

criss-cross wood balustrade; welded-steel porch railings were added in 1972. Stone facing extends along the front (east side) foundation of the original structure (photo CA-166-B-4).

Mimicking the front of the house, a gable frames the chimney on the rear (west side) of the structure (photo CA-166-B-5). In 1960, a new shingle roof was put on the house, which was replaced in 1980 with a metal roof. At some unknown dates a window was added to the north end of the rear of the house into the bathroom that was not in the original plans; this was later replaced by a smaller aluminum-framed sliding-glass window.

In 1946, identical 12 foot by 20 foot bedrooms were added to the north end of buildings 103 next to the existing bedroom. The north gable, its decorative detail, and the fenestration was simply moved out (SCE drawing 439021, photo CA-166-B-2). These additions were done in a manner very sympathetic to the original design.

The small unfinished basement (photo CA-166-B-6) is accessed from a door under the front porch (photo CA-166-B-4).

The 6-light front door enters into the 12 foot by 18 foot living room (photo CA-166-B-7). The walls in this room and throughout the house are plaster; original doors have simple wide decorative wood surrounds as do original windows which also have narrow sills. Two 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows pierce the east wall overlooking the front porch (photo CA-166-B-8). Two other 6-light over 1-light sash windows pierce the east wall flanking the former location of a fireplace (photo CA-166-B-9); the fireplace was removed in 1946 and replaced with a built-in bookshelf (SCE drawing 439021), which was later removed. A doorway at the south end of the living room leads to the kitchen. Bedroom number one is accessed through a panel door at the north end of the living room. Flooring is hardwood. The room is illuminated by a single electrical ceiling fixture.

Bedroom number one measures 9 feet by 13 feet. At the west end of the room panel doors open to a 6 foot by 3 foot walk-in closet and the bathroom (photo CA-166-B-10). A small 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed window pierces the west closet wall. A panel door through the north wall of bedroom number one provides access to bedroom number two. A 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed window is located on the east wall of bedroom number one (photo CA-166-B-11). Flooring is hardwood. Illumination is provided by a single electrical ceiling fixture.

The 8 foot by 6 foot bathroom has updated tub, sink, and toilet in the locations of the originals (photo CA-166-B-12). A modern sliding-glass window pierces the west wall above the tub. A single electric wall fixture above the sink provides illumination. Flooring is linoleum.

The 12 foot by 16 foot bedroom number two is the addition built in 1946. Like the original part of the house, walls are plaster. Flooring is hardwood like the living room and bedroom number one. Two panel doors on the west wall open to two separate walk-in closets (photo CA-166-B-13) suggesting that this addition was intended to be occupied by multiple children. One-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows with narrow wood surrounds pierce the north and east walls (photo CA-166-B-14).

The 9 foot by 12 foot kitchen has updated cabinets, sink, countertop, and faucet. One original wood-framed sliding-glass window pierces the north wall overlooking the front entry (photo CA-166-B-15). Two more original wood-framed sliding-glass windows pierce the south wall above the sink (photo CA-166-B-16). Flooring is linoleum. Illumination is provided by a single electrical ceiling fixture and a wall fixture over the sink.

A 6-light door on the west wall of the kitchen opens to the side-exit utility room. An adjacent panel door opens to the 5 foot by 6 foot walk-in pantry (photo CA-166-B-17). The pantry features shelving, linoleum flooring, and a 1-light over 1-light sash window through the south wall (photo CA-166-B-18). A single overhead electric light illuminates the pantry.

The side-exit utility room features a 1-light entry door on the south side (photo CA-166-B-19). A small alcove at the west end of the landing was originally designed to be a broom closet enclosed by a door like that on building 108.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

See HAER No. CA-166-A for a description of the historic context of the Rush Creek Hydroelectric Project. The Rush Creek Hydroelectric Project was one of three hydroelectric projects in the Mono Basin of California owned by the Nevada-California Power Company, the others being Lee Vining and Mill Creek (Lundy). Each of these facilities had small enclaves of worker housing.

III. SOURCES

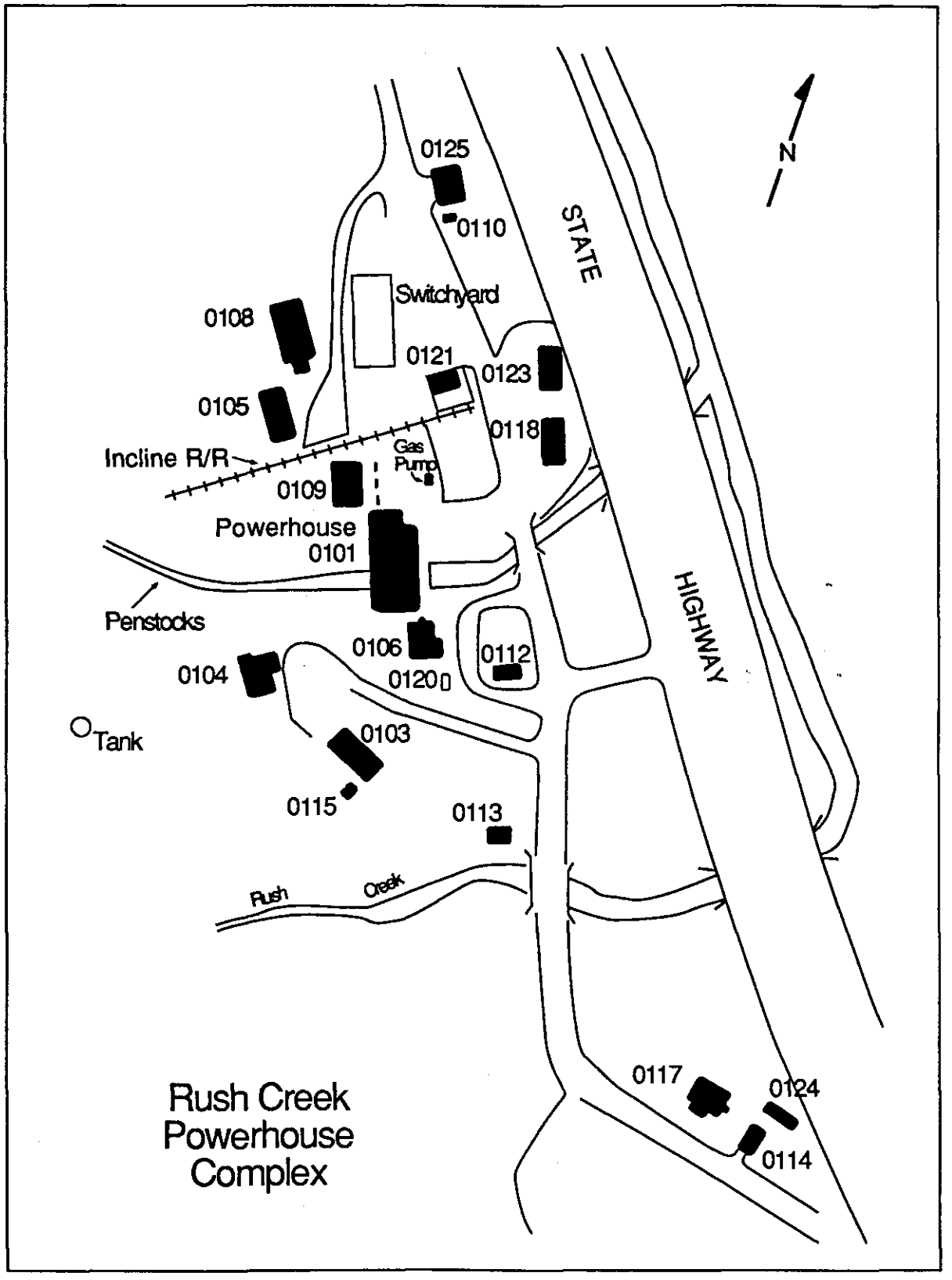
Diamond, Valerie H., and Robert A. Hicks
1988 Historic Overview of the Rush Creek and Lee Vining Creek Hydroelectric Projects. Report to the Southern California Edison Company. Fair Oaks: Theodoratus Cultural Research, Inc.

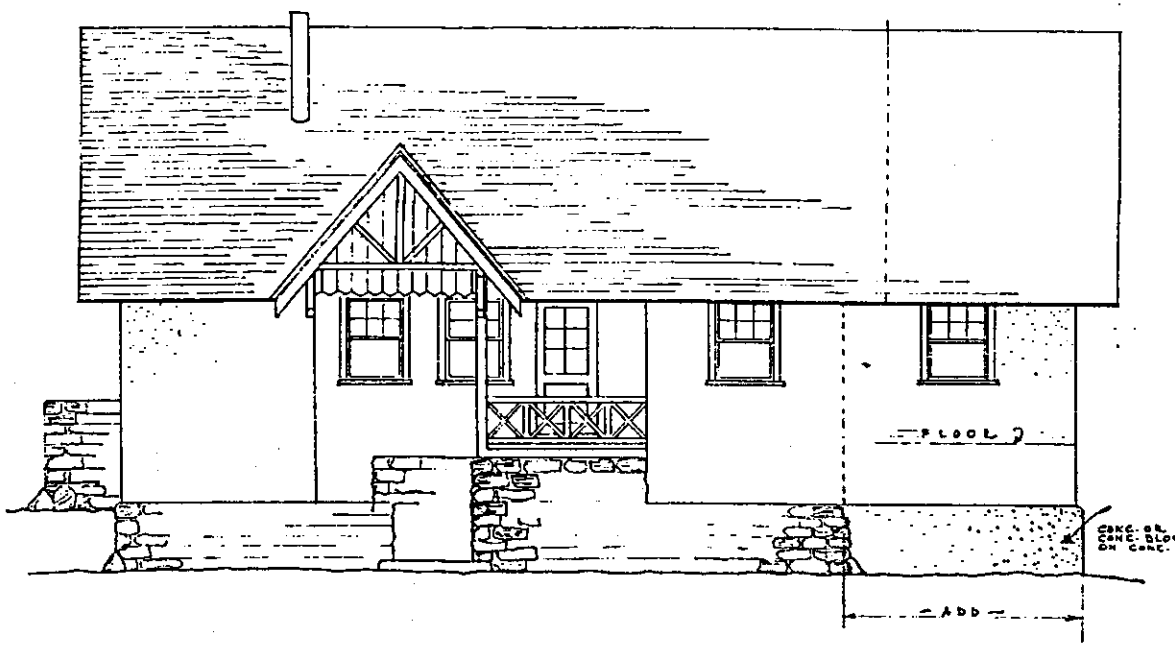
Fowler, Frederick Hall
1923 Hydroelectric Power Systems of California and Their Extensions into Oregon and Nevada. Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, *Water Supply Paper 493.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

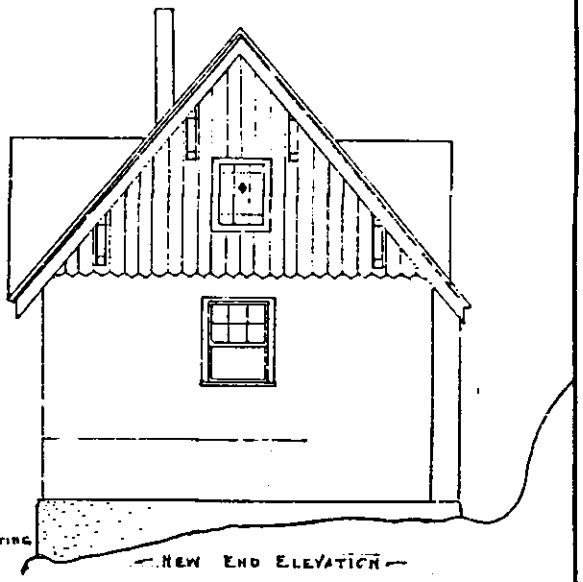
Williams, James C., and Robert A. Hicks
1989 Evaluation of the Historic Resources of the Rush Creek and Lee Vining Creek Hydroelectric System. Report to the Southern California Edison Company. Fair Oaks: Theodoratus Cultural Research, Inc.

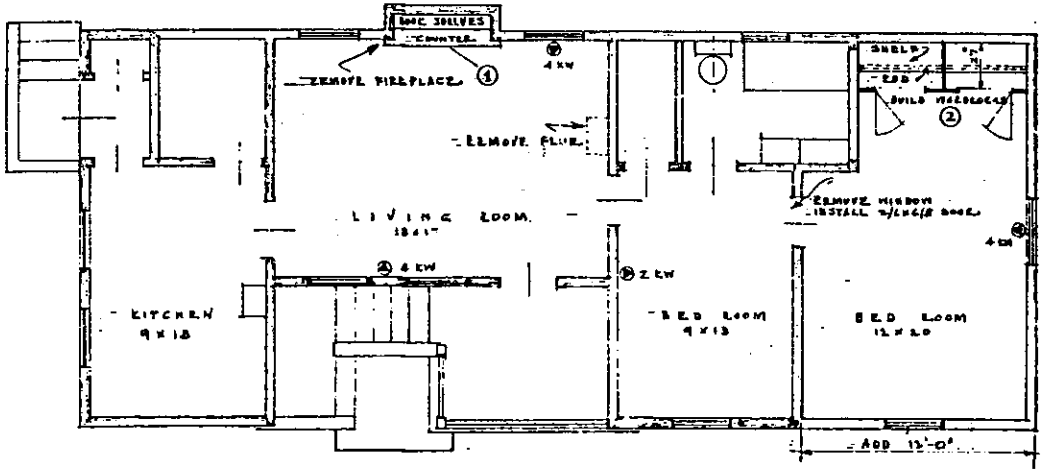
IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

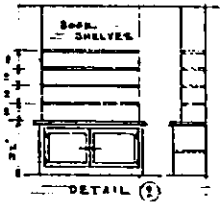
This Historic American Engineering Record documentation Building 103, Rush Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE has automated the Rush Creek Hydroelectric System for remote operation. This has made it unnecessary to have on-site crews, and thus residential units like this house have become obsolete.

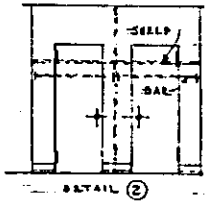

N
0125
0110
STATE
HIGHWAY
Switchyard
0108
0121
0123
0105
0118
Incline R/R
Gas Pump
0109
Powerhouse
0101
Penstocks
0106
0112
0104
0120
Tank
0103
0115
0113
Rush Creek
0117
0124
0114
Rush Creek
Powerhouse
Complex











BED ROOM ADDITION
FOR COTTAGES 8 & 9
RUSH CREEK PLANT

California Electric Power Company
RIVERSIDE, CALIF.

1/4" 3/15/46			485-14 SHEET NO 5

REVISIONS | REFERENCES

5-20 439021-0

S305

Rush Creek Hydroelectric System,
Worker Cottage (Bldg. No. 103)
HAER No. CA-166-B (Page 7)